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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Report of the Secretary-General

1. This report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 2850 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971 in which the Secretary-General was requested to report on the results of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session and also to transmit his report to the Economic and Social Council.
2. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment took place at Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972. Representatives of 113 States, invited in accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 2850 (XXVI), took part in the Conference (see A/CONF.48/14, sect. XII).
3. Representatives of specialized agencies and of the International Atomic Energy Agency and observers from other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also took part in the Conference in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 5 of the said resolution.
4. The Conference adopted the agenda that had been approved by the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session (A/CONF.48/1). It also adopted the rules of procedure approved by the General Assembly (A/CONF.48/3), after having decided to increase the number of Vice-Presidents from 3 to 27 and to change the title of the Rapporteur of the Conference to "Rapporteur General".
5. In accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 2850 (XXVI), the Secretary-General submitted to the Conference:
  - (a) A draft declaration on the human environment (A/CONF.48/4), which had been prepared by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Declaration established by the Preparatory Committee for the Conference;
  - (b) A draft action plan, consisting of a functional framework containing recommendations for action at the international level under the various subject areas of the agenda (A/CONF.48/5-10);



for environmental action at the national level contained in the Conference documents submitted by the Secretary-General (ibid., sect. V).

#### Institutional and Financial Arrangements

12. The Conference adopted without dissent its resolution 1 (I) on institutional and financial arrangements (ibid., sect. III). This resolution recommends the establishment by the General Assembly of a governing council for environmental programmes, an environment secretariat within the United Nations, an environment fund and procedures for the co-ordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system. The text of the resolution is reproduced in the annex to the present document. The General Assembly may wish to consider what action it should take on the recommendations addressed to it by the Conference in the resolution, with a view to ensuring the effective performance of the work of the United Nations system in the environmental field.

13. Information on the financial and organizational implications of any decisions which the General Assembly may consider adopting in this respect will be submitted in due course.

14. The Conference did not reach any decision concerning the location of the proposed environment secretariat. However, it decided that the matter should be left for the consideration of the General Assembly and requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to prepare a factual report on the locations formally offered (ibid., sect. X.C). This report will be submitted as an addendum to the present document.

15. The Conference also considered the question of convening a second United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and its recommendations to the General Assembly in this respect are contained in its resolution 4 (I) (ibid., sect. IV).

#### World Environment Day

16. The attention of the General Assembly is drawn to Conference resolution 2 (I) on the subject of a world environment day (ibid., sect. IV), the operative paragraph of which reads:

"Recommends that the General Assembly of the United Nations designate 5 June as 'World Environment Day' and decide that on that day every year the United Nations system and the Governments of the world undertake world-wide activities reaffirming their concern for the preservation and enhancement of the human environment, with a view to deepening environmental awareness and to pursuing the determination expressed at the Conference."

ANNEX

RESOLUTION 1 (I) ADOPTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Institutional and Financial Arrangements

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment,

Convinced of the need for prompt and effective implementation by Governments and the international community of measures designed to safeguard and enhance the human environment for the benefit of present and future generations of Man,

Recognizing that responsibility for action to protect and enhance the human environment rests primarily with Governments and, in the first instance, can be exercised more effectively at the national and regional levels,

Recognizing that environmental problems of broad international significance fall within the competence of the United Nations system,

Bearing in mind that international co-operative programmes in the environment field must be undertaken with due respect to the sovereign rights of States and in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and principles of international law,

Mindful of the sectoral responsibilities of the organizations of the United Nations system,

Conscious of the significance of regional and subregional co-operation in the field of the human environment and of the important role of the regional economic commissions and other regional intergovernmental organizations,

Emphasizing that problems of the human environment constitute a new and important area for international co-operation and that the complexity and interdependence of such problems requires new approaches,

Recognizing that the relevant international scientific and other professional communities can make an important contribution to international co-operation in the field of the human environment,

Conscious of the need for processes within the United Nations system which would effectively assist developing countries to implement environmental policies and programmes compatible with their development plans, and to participate meaningfully in international environmental programmes,

Convinced that, in order to be effective, international co-operation in the field of the human environment requires additional financial and technical resources,

Aware of the urgent need for a permanent institutional arrangement within the United Nations for the protection and improvement of the human environment,

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I

Governing Council for Environmental Programmes

1. Recommends that the General Assembly establish the Governing Council for Environmental Programmes composed of 54 members, elected for three-year terms on the basis of equitable geographical distribution;

2. Recommends further that the Governing Council have the following main functions and responsibilities:

(a) To promote international co-operation in the environment field and to recommend, as appropriate, policies to this end;

(b) To provide general policy guidance for the direction and co-ordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system;

(c) To receive and review the periodic reports of the Executive Director on the implementation of environmental programmes within the United Nations system;

(d) To keep under review the world environmental situation in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance should receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments;

(e) To promote the contribution of the relevant international scientific and other professional communities to the acquisition, assessment and exchange of environmental knowledge and information and, as appropriate, to the technical aspects of the formulation and implementation of environmental programmes within the United Nations system;

(f) To maintain under continuing review the impact of national and international environmental policies and measures on developing countries, as well as the problem of additional costs that might be incurred by developing countries in the implementation of environmental programmes and projects, to ensure that such programmes and projects shall be compatible with the development plans and priorities of those countries;

(g) To review and approve annually the programme of utilization of resources of the Environment Fund referred to in section III below;

3. Recommends further that the Governing Council report annually to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council, which would transmit to the General Assembly such comments on the report as it may deem necessary, particularly with regard to questions of co-ordination and to the relationship of environment policies and programmes within the United Nations system to over-all economic and social policies and priorities;

II

Environment secretariat

4. Recommends that a small secretariat be established in the United Nations to serve as a focal point for environmental action and co-ordination within the United Nations system in such a way as to ensure a high degree of effective management;

5. Recommends further that the environment secretariat be headed by the Executive Director, who shall be elected by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Secretary-General, and who shall be entrusted, inter alia, with the following responsibilities:

(a) To provide substantive support to the Governing Council;

(b) Under the guidance of the Governing Council, to co-ordinate environmental programmes within the United Nations system, to keep under review their implementation and assess their effectiveness;

(c) To advise, as appropriate and under the guidance of the Governing Council, intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system on the formulation and implementation of environmental programmes;

(d) To secure the effective co-operation of, and contribution from, the relevant scientific and other professional communities from all parts of the world;

(e) To provide, at the request of all parties concerned, advisory services for the promotion of international co-operation in the field of the environment;

(f) To submit to the Governing Council, on his own initiative or upon request, proposals embodying medium- and long-range planning for United Nations programmes in the environment field;

(g) To bring to the attention of the Governing Council any matter which he deems to require consideration by it;

(h) To administer, under the authority and policy guidance of the Governing Council, the Environment Fund;

(i) To report on environment matters to the Governing Council;

(j) To perform such other functions as may be entrusted to him by the Governing Council;

### III

#### The Environment Fund

6. Recommends that, in order to provide for additional financing for environmental programmes, a voluntary fund be established in accordance with existing United Nations financial procedures;
7. Recommends further that, in order to enable the Governing Council to fulfil its policy guidance role for the direction and co-ordination of environmental activities, the Environment Fund finance wholly or partly the costs of the new environmental initiatives undertaken within the United Nations system. These will include the initiatives envisaged in the Action Plan a/ adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, with particular attention to integrated projects, and such other environmental activities as may be decided upon by the Governing Council. The Governing Council shall review these initiatives with a view to taking appropriate decisions as to their continued financing;
8. Recommends that the Fund be used for financing such programmes of general interest as regional and global monitoring, assessment and data-collecting systems, including, as appropriate, costs for national counterparts; improvement of environmental quality management; environmental research; information exchange and dissemination; public education and training; assistance for national, regional and global environmental institutions; promotion of environmental research and studies for the development of industrial and other technologies best suited to a policy of economic growth compatible with adequate environmental safeguards; and such other programmes as the Governing Council may decide upon. In the implementation of such programmes due account should be taken of the special needs of the developing countries;
9. Recommends that the costs of servicing the Governing Council and providing the small core secretariat be borne by the regular budget of the United Nations. Operational programme costs, programme support and administrative costs of the Fund shall be borne by the Fund;
10. Recommends that, in order to ensure that the development priorities of developing countries shall not be adversely affected, adequate measures should be taken to provide additional financial resources on terms compatible with the economic situation of the recipient developing country. To this end, the Executive Director, in co-operation with competent organizations, will keep this problem under continuing review;
11. Recommends that the Fund, in pursuance of the objectives stated in paragraphs 7 and 8 above, be directed to the need for effective co-ordination in the implementation of international environmental programmes of the organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations;

a/ A/CONF.48/11, sect. II.C.

12. Recommends that, in the implementation of programmes to be financed by the Fund, organizations outside the United Nations system, particularly those in the countries and regions concerned, also be utilized as appropriate, in accordance with the procedures established by the Governing Council; such organizations are invited to support the United Nations environmental programmes, by complementary initiatives and contributions;
13. Recommends that the Governing Council formulate such general procedures as are necessary to govern the operations of the Fund;

#### IV

##### Co-ordination

14. Recommends that in order to provide for the maximum efficient co-ordination of United Nations environmental programmes, an Environmental Co-ordinating Board, chaired by the Executive Director, be established under the auspices and within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination;
15. Recommends further that the Environmental Co-ordinating Board meet periodically for the purpose of ensuring co-operation and co-ordination among all bodies concerned in the implementation of environmental programmes and that it report annually to the Governing Council;
16. Invites the organizations of the United Nations system to adopt the measures that may be required to undertake concerted and co-ordinated programmes with regard to international environmental problems, taking into account existing procedures for prior consultation, particularly on programme and budgetary matters;
17. Invites the regional economic commissions and the Economic and Social Office in Beirut, in co-operation where necessary with other appropriate regional bodies, to intensify further their efforts directed towards contributing to the implementation of environmental programmes in view of the particular need for rapid development of regional co-operation in this field;
18. Invites also other intergovernmental and those non-governmental organizations which have an interest in the field of the environment to lend their full support and collaboration to the United Nations with a view to achieving the largest possible degree of co-operation and co-ordination;
19. Calls upon Governments to ensure that appropriate national institutions shall be entrusted with the task of co-ordination of environmental action, both national and international;
20. Recommends that the General Assembly review, as appropriate, at its thirty-first session, the institutional arrangements which it may decide upon in pursuance of this recommendation, bearing in mind, inter alia, the responsibilities of the Economic and Social Council under the Charter of the United Nations.

17th plenary meeting  
15 June 1972